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ABSTRACT

Findings from a study of school restructuring models and their impact on the teaching/learning process are presented in this report. Following an overview of different restructuring approaches, a theoretical model for restructuring is described. Next, the restructuring practices implemented by the Stearns Elementary School in Pittsfield, Massachusetts, are examined. The case study identifies a theoretical model for schools' inductive developmental approach to educational change. An evaluation of the Stearns model's efficacy in regard to rules, roles, relationships, and results found the following changes: increased shared governance, use of strategies to enhance students' self-confidence, and expanded curriculum and teaching methods. Recommendations are made to specify expectations for student outcomes and to engage in more reflection and strategic planning. Appendices contain the Stearns School philosophy, organizational chart, and constitution, and summaries of Massachusetts Educational Assessment Program (MEAP) results, Stearns/MEAP comparisons, and the MEAP action plan. (LMI)

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LEARNING TO RESTRUCTURE SCHOOLS: LESSONS FROM THE STEARNS SCHOOL MODEL

by

Gary T. Reece

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Gary T. Reece

Research for Better Schools, Inc.
444 North Third Street
Philadelphia, PA 19123

November 1991

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PREFACE

The purpose of this study is to examine school restructuring practices. Commissioned by Arnold Webb, director of Research for Better Schools' (RBS) Urban Education project (UE), this report is meant to augment the work of UE's effort to expand the knowledge base about restructuring.

RBS' workscope for this study (Appendix A) emphasized both the conceptual design of restructuring models and their impact on the teaching-learning process. As per the workscope, the following report is based on RBS documents, the professional literature, and a site visit.

The report first provides a brief theoretical discussion of school restructuring. Promising strategies from different restructuring approaches are then offered as a theoretical model for restructuring. This theoretical model is not a recipe; rather, it is meant to provide guidelines to the work with restructuring sites. Finally, the report examines restructuring practices implemented by the Stearns Elementary School in Pittsfield, Massachusetts. One of seven Carnegie Grant schools in that state, Stearns has worked since 1987 to fashion its own definition of a restructured learning community. The report identifies the model that provides theoretical foundation for the inductive developmental approach to fundamental change which is taking place at the Stearns school and evaluates the Stearns' restructuring efforts against the RBS measure that changes must occur in roles, rules, relationships, and results if restructuring is truly taking place.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Special thanks go to Linda Porter and the teachers and students of the Stearns Elementary School in Pittsfield, Massachusetts. Porter's resourcefulness and indomitable spirit complement beautifully the inventiveness and dedication of the Stearns staff. From all of the "leaders and learners" at Stearns, I received a valuable lesson about keeping children as the focal point of restructuring. I also wish to express my gratitude to Pittsfield superintendent Robert L. LaFrankie for sharing his perspective on the Stearns Demonstration School and for allowing RBS to learn from his community's pioneering efforts.

With gratitude I acknowledge the support of Educate America, Inc. of Morristown, New Jersey in preparation of this manuscript. Linda Tillman provided expert and invaluable assistance in typing the many drafts of the report.

While appreciative of the contributions of those mentioned above, the structure and content of the following paper remain solely the responsibility of this writer.

Gary T. Reece

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INTRODUCTION

The idea of "restructuring" schools has captured the attention of education, business, and government leaders. The term first gained popularity in the business world. During the 1980s, corporate takeovers and mergers often resulted in a major redesign of the new organization. Businesses that faced financial difficulty also "restructured" their debt. In education, the term has been applied to a variety of improvement efforts. These run the gamut from one-dimensional projects (e.g., shared-decisionmaking) to comprehensive plans to redesign the entire social system of a school.

In this report, the term restructuring is used in its more comprehensive sense. Restructuring means broad, systemic change driven by a new conception of the purposes of schooling. Rethinking purposes triggers changes that are designed to produce a different order of results. Restructuring transcends school effectiveness, or even school reform.

This study has been guided by RBS' definition of restructuring. Grounded in sociology, it posits a fundamental change in the rules, roles, and relationships which govern the social system of a school. RBS also maintains that the purpose of restructuring must be substantially different results for students.

Recently, there has been much public discourse about the need to "save" American education. President George Bush and the nation's governors have promulgated ambitious outcome goals for the year 2000. The President and his Secretary of Education, Lamar Alexander, have unveiled their America 2000 plan to reach these goals. Organizations like the National Center on Education and the Economy in Rochester, New York, and Educate America, Inc. in Morristown, New Jersey, have proposed different approaches toward national testing. Each expects such testing to occasion major changes in teaching and learning. Chris Whittle, president of Whittle Communications, Inc., headquartered in Tennessee, has announced plans to design a new paradigm for schooling. His $60 million development effort will result in a national chain of for-profit schools. He seeks to educate two million children in one thousand such schools by the year 2010. The intensity level of the national discourse appears to have increased since the 1983 Nation at Risk report thrust schooling onto the national agenda.

School restructuring is the current response to these warnings and exhortations to improve. Much is being written about restructuring, although just how much fundamental change is necessary to merit the label is unclear. Evidence about results is also scant.

School restructuring projects often use traditional standardized tests to evaluate the impact of various interventions. Some efforts labeled restructuring which have been in place several years show promising results. The School Development Program directed by James P. Comer in New Haven, Connecticut is one example. Another is the Public School Academy in Minneapolis, Minnesota which is supported by the General Mills Foundation. The Johnson City School District in New York State has achieved notable results from its Outcome-Driven Developmental Model, which facilitates comprehensive restructuring in pursuit of

desired student achievement outcomes. However, broad scale and non-traditional assessment techniques that measure student outcomes beyond the basic skills are not yet available.

Restructuring is neither a formula nor a franchise. Away from the drawing board, restructuring is more like artistry. Inspiration and passion drive the work. Principles of line and form temper expression. Color and texture personalize the piece. And knowledge and experience integrate disparate elements into the desired result. "Laboring," "breathing life into," "despairing," and "transcending limits" are the images of artistic workmanship which give true meaning to the work we call restructuring.

A MODEL FOR SCHOOL RESTRUCTURING

The following model for restructuring brings together components taken from a variety of restructuring approaches. These are offered as touchstones for helping a school district that wishes to redefine education at one or more schools. Each school is a unique social system; its particular strengths and needs must be taken into consideration when formulating a restructuring plan. Communities committed to systemic change (not merely incremental tinkering) will be more effective if they attend to several key restructuring components: student outcomes, focusing on central variables, adequate support, extensive planning, information management, a unifying theme, and shared-decisionmaking.

To enter into a restructuring program, district/school leaders need to articulate a new educational vision based on future societal needs. From this vision, the school community (educators, older students, parents, businesses, and other community representatives) should develop a concise mission statement. Translating the mission into goals, measurable objectives, and specific student outcomes is the next important step and should also involve a cross-section of the community. These outcomes should address a broad array of knowledge and the skills, behavior, and attitudes, that are needed for the first half of the 21st century. All students should be expected to achieve these outcomes. Having reached consensus on the desired outcomes, a school community can turn its attention to specific dimensions of restructuring.

In February 1991, David T. Conley, as part of the ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management's Trends and Issues Series, published a practical guide to restructuring. Conley, an associate professor of education at the University of Oregon's College of Education, defines restructuring as:

> Activities that change fundamental assumptions, practices, and relationships, both within the organization and between the organization and the outside world, in ways that lead to improved student learning.

After surveying the various dimensions of restructuring discussed by leading researchers, Conley cautions:

> Since it is so easy to become bogged down by only one or two major changes in public education, restructuring activities must be chosen carefully. It is easy to lose sight of the core mission of schools and become enmeshed in projects that, while interesting, bear little hope of improving the learning of students.

Conley's definition of restructuring parallels closely RBS' definition. Both speak to fundamental change in rules (assumptions), roles (practices), and relationships to produce substantially different student results (improved student learning).

A school restructuring model might well be built around the 11 variables Conley describes. These 11 categories are presented in the following groups:

- Central Variables
  - Curriculum
  - Instruction
  - Assessment/evaluation

- Enabling Variables
  - Time
  - Technology
  - Learning environment
  - School-community relationships

- Supporting Variables
  - Governance
  - Working relationships
  - Personnel
  - Teacher leadership

To effect a change in student learning, Conley believes a restructuring model should direct the majority of its energy toward the central variables of curriculum, instruction, and assessment/evaluation (Conley, 1991).

For the most part, restructuring will occur in existing rather than in new schools. These social systems have a history and have norms shaped by current and past experience. A strategic design for school restructuring should consider carefully prior improvement efforts. Notwithstanding the caveat to focus on central variables, at the beginning of a restructuring initiative it may be prudent to invest resources in enabling and supporting variables. Those responsible for planning the efforts can identify which variables are most essential. Sensitivity to the needs of restructuring participants will build support for the really tough work of modifying the central variables which directly affect student learning.

The approach being suggested is to attend to factors such as time, teacher leadership, and working relationships concurrently with the modification of curriculum, instruction, and assessment. Teachers, administrators, and parents need incentives for taking ownership of the restructuring efforts at their school. Some early attention to process variables will facilitate the hard work involved in reconceptualizing, teaching, and learning.

Those being asked to modify their roles and relationships need ongoing support. A model restructuring program should have sufficient resources to permit participants to plan their work and work their plan. This includes frequent relief from regular assignments, access to facilitators, external experts, and support personnel to handle data gathering, records maintenance, and secretarial functions. School staff involved in restructuring should be encouraged to switch voluntarily to year-long contracts even if school remains a ten-month program. Business partners should be cultivated and invited to contribute trained facilitators, conference accommodations, and/or evaluation assistance.

Adequate support for restructuring would provide sufficient "shock" to resuscitate and energize current staff -- a necessary, although not sufficient, condition for restructuring.

In addition to clarifying student outcomes and establishing a supportive environment for change, the restructuring model should provide for the early development of a strategic and operational plan. The strategic plan will guide the school over the long-term (five to eight years). The operational plan will provide a blueprint for nearer-term activities and should be refined based on ongoing experience and evaluation. All stakeholders, especially those unaccustomed to participation in school change efforts (e.g., parents, students, business, community), should have input to these plans. They should continue to have substantial input as the plans are refined over time. Resources must also be adequate to permit implementation of the plan. Decisions regarding resource allocations should be made, whenever practicable, by a school-based planning team that works cooperatively with central office/board stakeholders. Ownership of the "restructuring game plan" by school-level participants is critical to achieving the desired changes.

A model restructuring effort requires sophisticated management and dissemination of information. The community must be consistently informed about what to expect and not to expect. Progress, problems, and results must be publicly communicated on a regular basis. The message that change takes time bears repeating often. Leaders of restructuring efforts should avoid operating "in camera" in an attempt to avoid close scrutiny from policymakers and consumers.

A model for school restructuring should also include an underlying theme which integrates the various dimensions restructuring may take. It makes sense for those involved in restructuring to select a theme based on local needs and values. In the case study which follows, the Stearns School team adopted the themes: "A Community of Leaders and Learners" and "Learning Through Cooperation." These unifying concepts have helped the Stearns community determine priorities and select complementary restructuring strategies.

Under the rubric of restructuring, schools can select from a smorgasbord of promising strategies. Central to a restructuring plan, however, must be fundamental change in the nature of what and how children learn. To be successful, restructuring must produce knowledgeable young people who know how to learn, solve problems, work in groups, appreciate diversity and subtlety, and can think and communicate effectively. For changes of this magnitude to occur in static institutions like schools, the environment in schools must be "unfrozen."

A model restructuring effort should include incentives for "unfreezing" rules, roles, and relationships in a school. For example, district planners can begin to thaw the climate by shifting decisionmaking to those most affected by decisions. They can also enable school-based planning teams to make the learning environment more interesting or to improve the way people treat each other. Encouraging both children and adults to learn together is another way of

loosening up the system. Whatever enabling and supporting variables the team manipulates as incentives, these changes are warranted only if they strengthen the school's ability to achieve the new student outcomes.

In addition to attention to student outcomes, central variables, adequate support, planning, information management, unifying themes, and shared-decision-making, several other components warrant inclusion in a restructuring model. Among these are:

- bolstering students' self-image
- providing needed social services to students and their families
- grouping students heterogeneously, promoting cooperative learning and using flexible grouping strategies (e.g., multi-year, cross-aged)
- enabling students to be active learners who are responsible for their own education
- redefining the role of teacher as educational coach rather than dispenser of knowledge
- enabling students, teachers, and parents to monitor pupil progress by means of performance-based and other "authentic" assessments
- involving parents and other community members in planning school operations
- designing learning experiences which routinely occur outside of school
- empowering students and teachers to use technology as a learning tool
- adopting the notion of school as a learning community rather than a societal sorting mechanism.

Participants in school restructuring have finite time, energy, and resources. To be effective they must begin somewhere. Specifying what outcomes are expected for all students is a sensible starting place. Curriculum, instruction, and assessment/evaluation are integral to achieving these results, and thus, deserve the most effort. However, attention must also be paid to enabling and supporting variables which are closely linked to these central variables. People must accept the invitation to restructure; imposed restructuring is an oxymoron.

SCHOOL RESTRUCTURING: A CASE STUDY

> Change does not come easy, even to a group of dedicated, willing participants. It is not an overnight happening. It is a difficult, time consuming process, and there are days when we feel we have taken on an albatross... Mutual trust, respect, and a common goal have held us together. (Learning Through Cooperation, 1990.)

Purpose and Methodology

What follows is a study of the Stearns Elementary School in Pittsfield, Massachusetts. A site visit was conducted to learn more about how school staff are translating the tenets of restructuring into practice. A key part of this work involved discovering the factors which supported and/or impeded Stearns' school improvement effort.

Stearns was chosen for a site visit because of its recognition as an elementary school committed to fundamental change, its proximity to the mid-Atlantic region, and its willingness to participate in the RBS study. The Stearns School is one of 62 recently singled out for its restructuring efforts by the School Improvement Resources Inquiry USA (SIRIUS-A) Project. Funded by the Indiana Department of Education and Indiana University, the SIRIUS-A Project conducted a nationwide search for schools involved in systemic restructuring. "Systematic restructuring refers to interrelated rather than piecemeal changes...," according to those who conducted the study (Reigeluth, Norris & Ryan, 1990).

Initial telephone contact was made by the RBS project consultant with the Stearns' principal, Linda J. Porter, in early May 1991. She responded favorably to the proposed visit and study. This discussion was followed up with a letter to the principal and staff (Appendix B). Included in this letter were an explanation of the study and a proposed itinerary for a two day visit. School personnel were invited to modify these plans in light of school needs and interests. Subsequent to the letter, a date for the visit was confirmed by telephone. The visit took place on Tuesday, May 22 and Wednesday, May 23, 1991.

The first day of the visit began with a breakfast meeting involving the consultant and the principal. During this time, Ms. Porter discussed the history and mission of the Stearns School. She also described it special characteristics, current status as a Carnegie school, and its accomplishments since its opening in 1987.

To introduce the RBS consultant to the faculty, the principal hosted a before-school reception in the school library. The consultant met most teachers, paraprofessionals, and parent volunteers individually and then explained the RBS restructuring study project to the group. The principal and consultant then toured the school and visited each classroom to observe a "community of learners and leaders" in action.

The remainder of the day consisted of interviews with the school staff. The reading specialist provided an in-depth analysis of the in-class assistance which she and the resource teacher provide to students who need additional support. This extended interview was followed by lunch with available faculty and then three rounds of 30-minute interviews with pairs of teachers. After school, the principal shared and discussed key documents which chronicle the origin and development of the Stearns Magnet School Demonstration Model. The first day concluded with an evening discussion with the principal and two teachers who had played a major role in shaping the Stearns model.

To begin the second day, the principal and consultant met at school to discuss student outcome data. During the session, the consultant also clarified issues raised by his overnight review of the written materials received the previous day. Finally, this discussion afforded time to plan for a mid-morning meeting with the Superintendent of Schools, Robert L. LaFrankie.

The 90-minute meeting with the superintendent occurred at the district administration building located in the business center of Pittsfield. A seasoned educator, LaFrankie had been a school administrator in New Jersey and had served as superintendent in New York and Pennsylvania prior to assuming the leadership of the Pittsfield Public Schools in 1986. The discussion with the superintendent centered around the origins and progress to date of the Stearns experiment. LaFrankie and Porter also shared their views on the district-wide impact of Stearns and on the potential impact of the current fiscal crisis on their demonstration school. The interviews concluded with LaFrankie's analysis of his future plans for Stearns.

Upon returning to Stearns, the consultant and principal toured the environmental center located on the mountainside behind the school. Then the consultant hosted two lunch sessions for small groups of fourth and fifth grade students. Typical of the Stearns model, these children were elected by classmates to tell the consultant about their special school. The visit concluded with a feedback session for the principal. Originally, the full faculty were to have heard the consultant's impressions. However, given the exceptional heat in May, the consultant and principal decided to forego any further imposition on the staff. It was agreed that a draft copy of the Stearns report would be shared with the principal to ensure accuracy.

Background

The Pittsfield School Committee authorized the Superintendent of Schools to reopen Stearns School in 1987. The Committee acted primarily to alleviate overcrowding at another school. However, district policymakers were also responding to the preference of parents in the Stearns area to have their neighborhood school reopened after five years of disuse. To add to the attractiveness of this redistricting strategy, the superintendent proposed that Stearns be commissioned as a "magnet school demonstration model." Necessity, in effect, drove invention and enabled Pittsfield "...to do something truly imaginative, and... take full advantage of the [overcrowding] situation."

Stearns is a small K-5 school. Consisting of eight classrooms and a library, it contains one class per grade level except in two grades. The superintendent recruited the Stearns faculty from within the district. Teachers were chosen for their willingness to build a model school based on four major concepts:

- That the priority objective would be to focus intensified attention on the needs of individual students to help them achieve academic success.
- That the learning environment would be organized in a manner that would enable each child to develop a positive self-image while remaining an integral part of his/her class group.
- That challenging expectations would be made for staff as well as for students.
- That the availability of additional resources, human and material, would make it feasible for each teacher to closely monitor each child's progress and prescribe learning activities appropriate to identified needs. (District Memorandum, John Kreiger, Assistant Superintendent, 1990)

Faculty were directly involved in hiring the principal, Linda Porter, a veteran teacher and union leader in Pittsfield. The principal assumed her position in mid-July 1987. She and the faculty collaborated to design an educational community based on these four broad concepts. Together, they built a vision of school based on "Learning Through Cooperation." According to a September 1990 three-year review of the Stearns experiment, their school would be one "...in which children are working and sharing with other children, teachers are working and sharing with other teachers, and... parents are active partners in the educational process." What emerged from this educational vision was the "Stearns School Philosophy." This statement sets forth 15 beliefs which guide planning and practice at Stearns (Appendix C).

During its first full year of operation (1987-88), Stearns successfully applied to the state for a Carnegie grant. The purpose of their proposal was to "...restructure the learning environment by implementing a model which empowers staff and parents to assume leadership roles and actively participate in the shaping of the school climate, philosophy, goals, and instructional strategies." From the outset, Pittsfield Superintendent LaFrankie made clear that Stearns would receive no additional resources beyond its regular budgetary allocation. Therefore, the initial Carnegie grant of $30,000 was critical to the faculty's efforts to flesh out their "demonstration school model." Porter, the full faculty, and the school-based management team competed successfully for Carnegie grant funds through the State of Massachusetts for the 1988-89, 1989-90, and 1990-91 school years. The governor's proposed budget for 1991-92 does not presently contain continuation funding for the Carnegie schools in Massachusetts.

The Stearns Model

The principal, teachers, and parents at Stearns School are inventing their own restructuring model. Their model is an inductive, searching, developmental approach to fundamental change. They began in 1987 with an educational vision. Their school was to be a nurturing community for children and adults, all of whom would be leaders and learners. With a commitment to learning through cooperation, Stearns adults set out to translate that vision into new rules, roles, and relationships. Their long-range goal was to achieve substantially improved academic results.

Shared Leadership

Decisionmaking at the Stearns School occurs almost always at the level closest to the classroom. With eight full-time classroom teachers, three support specialists (i.e., library media, reading, and special education), a principal, and senior custodian, all staff at Stearns participate actively in decisionmaking. To operationalize the concept of shared leadership, formal deliberative bodies exist for students, faculty, parents, and business partners. At least seven such groups are active at Stearns. These include:

- The Full Faculty Team - Full-time faculty and part-time support personnel meet weekly to discuss school management issues. Consensus governs their decisionmaking. Personnel receive an hourly stipend. Each faculty member assumes a school-wide leadership responsibility to which he/she devotes 9 of the 36 paid weekly seminars.

- The Student Forum - Class-elected representatives meet twice monthly with faculty advisors. Together, they set the agenda for a monthly Town Meeting. These occur at a student gathering held weekly to foster student affiliation, share concerns, and celebrate successes. The Student Forum may refer items to the Full Faculty Team for resolution.

- The Stearns Coalition (TSC) - The school's parent organization whose Advisory Group pursues fact-finding, communicates with other innovative schools, conducts studies, and makes recommendations to the Full Faculty Team. TSC elects parents to other school leadership groups.

- The School Improvement Council - A permanent subcommittee of the School-Based Management Team, this Council is required by state law. It prioritizes the expenditure of discretionary funding and works closely with the TSC Executive Board to choose projects which TSC can fund.

- Coordinating Committee (CC) - A five person, non-decisionmaking body which includes the principal, two elected teachers, a support staff person, and the chairperson of the TSC Advisory Group, the CC serves as a communications link to all other leadership groups and constituencies. The CC also serves as a clearinghouse by directing problems to appropriate groups, setting the agenda for the Full Faculty Team and School-Based Management Team (SBMT), creating subcommittees, reviewing reports

prior to SBMT submission, and providing resources and data to subcommittees, as needed.

- Subcommittees - Specific task oriented action teams created by the Coordinating Committee (CC). These three to six-person teams consist of teachers and/or parents or community representatives. Subcommittee reports are channeled through the CC to the SBMT.

- The School-Based Management Team (SBMT) - The SBMT reviews recommendations made by subcommittees only if these proposals affect the entire school community. Membership consists of elected teachers, parents, a community representative, a business representative, and the principal. (Note: During 1987-88 and 1988-89 the SBMT, working as a committee of the whole, involved itself in a broader array of discrete issues. This design proved unwieldy.)

After four years of refinement, the Stearns community has evolved a workable, although intricate arrangement for involving every segment in decisionmaking (see Appendix D).

Focus on Individual Needs

Attending to individual needs and ensuring the success of each student are at the heart of Stearns' restructuring model. To foster student academic and personal success, the Stearns community has committed itself to helping each child develop a positive self-image. The adults at Stearns have modified not only governance but also teaching, staff development, curriculum, scheduling/grouping, assessment, reporting of pupil progress, and support services to achieve their goal of improving student outcomes through restructuring. In addition, Stearns has also instituted special guidance, decisionmaking, cross-grade sharing, self-evaluation, and volunteer programs which help students value themselves. This attention to modifying roles and relationships has at times both stimulated and exhausted the personnel at Stearns.

Stearns personnel concentrate on individual students. This orientation manifests itself in various practices and procedures. For example, at weekly two-hour screening meetings, a team meets with the principal to discuss approximately five students who appear to require additional support. Participants include the classroom teacher, reading and resource teachers, a counselor, the school psychologist, and a speech therapist. These professionals develop an early intervention plan for each child and monitor the child's subsequent progress. Classroom and support specialists enhance communication through Stearns Integrated Services Model.

An important outgrowth of the Stearns restructuring efforts has been integrating remedial reading and special education services into the regular classroom. By providing in-class help to all students, teachers can identify potential problems early. This approach also avoids stigmatizing students who are the primary recipients of extra help. The reading and resource teachers complement the regular classroom teacher, parent volunteers, and practicum participants who work simultaneously in one classroom.

Both the reading and resource specialists consult weekly with each classroom teacher (via Carnegie support) to plan as an instructional team. Reading instruction has been scheduled in a.m. and p.m. blocks to enable the reading specialist to work several times a week in all classes. On occasion the specialists assume the lead teaching role. This frees the classroom teacher to work with small groups or with individuals. Stearns has virtually eliminated pull out programs from its repertoire of student services. The faculty has received funding from the Massachusetts Field Center for Teaching and Learning to review and refine Stearns' Integrated Services Model.

Another hallmark of the Stearns School is its use of outside adults to reduce student-teacher ratios. It is common for three to five adults to work simultaneously with students in one classroom. Classroom teachers spend considerable time planning for these extra personnel. Students are accustomed to working at various learning stations and interest centers. During a single class period, a student may work in a small heterogeneous group with the regular teacher, meet with a parent volunteer to share a story, and then receive help from the reading or resource specialist on some part of his/her Individual Education Plan. To accommodate as many families as possible, Stearns has a comparatively high pupil-to-teacher ratio (25:1). However, the school's use of additional volunteer and paid adults to work in class with students transforms this ratio to between 3:1 and 10:1. Children receive extraordinary individual attention at Stearns.

Stearns aggressively recruits adults from the community to provide more individual attention to students. An important element in the Stearns restructuring model is its volunteer program. Approximately 65 percent of the Stearns families (95 of 146) during 1989-90 were represented by one volunteer parent. Over 2,300 volunteer hours were logged. Approximately one thousand of these hours were devoted to in-class and special projects which involved direct student contact. In addition, Stearns serves as a learning laboratory for student teachers from Elms College and for practicum students from other institutions. The school hosts six interns each semester. The principal and four teachers serve as a clinical support team for student teachers. Through its Carnegie grant, Stearns has also identified successful parent volunteers to work in a paid parent practicum experience. These parents work under the regular teacher's supervision to provide individual help, assist at learning stations, and provide time out options for students experiencing stress.

Stearns relies on other students to support children in the primary grades. Students in grades K-2 also have a Big Brother or Big Sister from grades 3-5 who regularly share projects and establish relationships with them. Students in grades 4-6 consistently described their mentoring role in positive terms. They spoke of feeling good about their own abilities and thought that their efforts were appreciated by their little brothers and sisters. Teachers also attested to the benefits to both younger and older students derived from the program which increases the amount of individual attention and recognition each child receives.

To develop student leadership ability, Stearns provides all students with practical opportunities to express opinions, change current practice, and/or make choices. School restructuring at Stearns involves students, too. With adult facilitators, students participated in a Constitutional Convention and wrote the Stearns School Constitution (Appendix E). The guiding principles incorporated in this document (conspicuously displayed throughout the school) provide a framework for weekly gatherings. This coming together of the whole school community is intended to develop self-confidence and a positive self-image. Even kindergarten students walk up to the microphone to propose an idea or contribute to a discussion. Gatherings are a forum for celebrating accomplishments, class presentations, and a monthly town meeting. Town Meetings afford children direct input into school operations. In preparation for gatherings, students and teachers regularly hold classroom meetings. These sessions promote discussion, problem solving, and conflict resolution.

Stearns takes advantage of its smallness to concentrate on each child. The principal, faculty, and parents have established policies and mechanisms to ensure each child's growth. These extraordinary efforts to nurture each child complement what transpires between teachers in class.

Teaching and Learning

No students are tracked at Stearns. Stearns faculty eschew the comparison and sorting functions of schools. They explicitly maintain that these strategies are inappropriate for students in primary and intermediate grades.

Students experience all curriculum areas as part of heterogeneous groups. Teachers offer a range of learning opportunities and increasingly structure cooperative learning experiences for their students. Teachers also prepare interdisciplinary units which integrate art, social studies, and music in thematic units and which draw upon the different strengths of students.

In the past two years, staff have adopted a more hands-on approach toward math and science instruction. The faculty has also received two state grants to use math manipulatives more effectively and to develop an environmental education program. Students are also writing more in all curricular areas as part of the faculty's increasing commitment to a process approach to writing.

Teachers at Stearns are encouraged to learn through cooperation. They observe one another teach and team teach some units. They use Carnegie funds to provide one and one-half days of substitute coverage weekly to permit team planning and consultation for integrated services. Each month, teachers at Stearns also participate in an after-school sharing session. Stearns faculty members receive a stipend to plan the session and to present in an area of expertise or interest. This commitment of resources to **staff directed** professional development underscores the core value of teachers modeling what it means to be part of a community of learners and leaders.

The faculty have considerable flexibility regarding instructional methodology. At Stearns there is room for both literature and basal-based reading programs. Some staff use primarily a whole language approach toward reading/

language arts instruction while others adhere mostly to a textbook. All staff, however, have been trained in integrating literature and writing into basal reading programs. (Note: The faculty reached consensus on expending their entire materials budget for 1990-91 on trade books to facilitate a literature based approach to reading.) Characteristic of the Stearns ethos, staff readily acknowledge the influence of colleagues' alternative approaches on their own skills repertoire.

Students attending Stearns are encouraged to be active learners. Each day, students must make choices in class. For the most part, teachers employ interest centers and learning stations as part of their daily instructional plan. Classrooms feature reading lofts (built by parents), incubators, cocoons sheltering "soon-to-be" butterflies, a real human skeleton, drying art projects, and dioramas. Students may choose to work with one of the extra adults in class after they have completed their core lesson. Classrooms are uniformly alive with activity.

A visitor to Stearns quickly notices that even the youngest students are able to work alone or in a small group under the general supervision of the regular teacher. The faculty encourages students to assume responsibility for their own learning. Part of this emphasis on self-directed learning guided through self-reflection is evident in the use of portfolios. Students save their work and use it as a self-evaluation tool when conferencing with teachers and parents.

The faculty and parents of Stearns have begun to explore alternatives to traditional grade-level arrangements. An initial move has been to allow one teacher to remain with the same students for kindergarten and first grade. This better enables the teacher to provide a developmental curriculum for each child. By reducing adjustment time at the beginning of grade one, and by strengthening each student's bond with the teacher, Stearns' staff hopes to build on students' known strengths. In addition, teachers will have more time to forge an effective partnership with parents and to maintain momentum from one year to another. The faculty are evaluating this project to determine its suitability for other grades.

Teachers choose to work at Stearns. Several staff commented that they have never worked harder in their professional careers. In addition to numerous committee assignments, managing a small cadre of adult helpers, and bringing lessons as well as democracy to life in their classrooms, the faculty plans and participates in a substantial amount of inservice work.

One goal of the faculty is to strengthen and expand their repertoire of teaching strategies to match the "diverse needs and learning styles of students." Using Carnegie resources, the staff annually arranges for itself over 40 hours of training. They also participate in district inservice offerings. Many pursue additional course work and other professional growth experiences. Stearns staff repeatedly point out the irony that as they improve their ability to help children who may not be succeeding in more traditional schools, the proportion of such children increases each year. (Note: The district

percentage of reduced and free lunch students is approximately 13%; Stearns percentage has recently increased from 21% to 27%.)

Curriculum

Curriculum development at Stearns consists primarily of exploring, sharing, and adopting curriculum innovations. The purpose, as captured by the school's 1990-91 Carnegie application, is to identify that which "...will challenge learners to meet their full potential." Other than textbook skills arrays and the implicit curriculum inherent in standardized testing programs, Stearns has not yet developed student exit outcomes and benchmarks in light of which curriculum is evaluated or modified.

Teachers at Stearns have considerable flexibility regarding grade level curriculum. For example, in reading, grade 1 employs a whole language approach while grade 5 relies primarily on the basal reader. The staff, however, is generally moving toward a more literature-based, whole language reading program. Teachers at Stearns are also adopting a process approach to writing. To complement this approach, they are employing holistic scoring strategies and are involving students in self-assessment of writing portfolios.

As faculty at a demonstration school, Stearns teachers receive release time and some funding to study curricular innovations. Through monthly sharing sessions, teachers are able to present to colleagues what they have learned or what they have found to be effective. Faculty are invited to observe or try out new strategies. Each teacher is free to participate or not participate in curricular initiatives. As a result, some classrooms emphasize activity centers while others do not. Some routinely involve four or more adults at a time while others find a teacher and aide to be most effective.

Science is an especially strong curriculum area at Stearns. Several teachers have an expertise and a love of science which have infected much of the school. Exhibits, experiments, various gestating species, and many opportunities for hands-on learning are evident throughout Stearns. Science instruction spills out of the classrooms into a beautiful ten acre hillside and meadow which is a natural environmental laboratory. Science also provides a vehicle for the school's emphasis on developing student's divergent/convergent thinking skills. In cooperation with its business partners, Stearns students participate in an annual Invention Convention as an extension of the science program.

Mathematics instruction also has taken a decidedly hands-on approach at Stearns. In light of weak standardized test results in the area of math computation, staff have begun providing students with manipulative learning materials. Teachers have devoted staff development sessions to strengthening their ability to help their students learn and enjoy math.

Another curricular thrust has been the teaching of French at all grade levels. Using whole language strategies, students are taught words, phrases, and expressions by their classroom teacher and by specially trained high school mentors from the AP French course. French culture is also integrated into this enrichment program.

To address students' affective growth, Stearns has instituted a conflict resolution training program. Students are taught how to resolve interpersonal problems using a "win-win" negotiations philosophy. Through this training provided by one of the faculty, other teachers have expanded their classroom management skills. Conflict resolution is now being offered as part of a parenting program so that students will experience more consistency in their interactions with adults at school and at home.

Technology was to have been an integral part of the Stearns Demonstration Model. Originally, the school was to have served pupils in grades K-3. Its expansion to K-5 forestalled plans for a computer laboratory. At present, all classrooms have stand-alone computers. However, staff have not yet found a way to use technology to augment their efforts to have students become active, self-directed learners.

Another dream which remains unfulfilled is the Stearns Discovery Center. In 1989, the school's parents and business partners had arranged for a greenhouse to be donated to the school. While the district evaluated the offer, the facility was given to another group. The proposed Discovery Center would have housed materials for nature trails and an ecology curriculum, math and science manipulatives, an art center, and a display, presentation, and project area. The Stearns Coalition and Business Partnership are actively searching for a similar unit to extend the school's curriculum via a Discovery Center.

The social studies curriculum is unified by the theme of "Understanding Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow." Endlessly elastic, social studies affords teachers and students creative opportunities to draw on many disciplines to communicate about societal institutions, specific eras, and enduring ideas. At the time of the RBS consultant's visit, hallway display cases and bulletin boards were alive with exhibits such as life on the American frontier (e.g., students' diary entries brought to life the dangers and monotony of Wagon train life circa 1855). Stearns' emphasis on student participation in school governance fits nicely with the New England town meeting, cradle of the revolution traditions. Stearns is a demonstration lab for democratic representative government in action.

The unusual level of parent involvement in Stearns provides an occasion to extend the curriculum into students' homes. Parents are invited to improve their own skills as teachers. Many do teach/tutor through the volunteer and parent practicum programs. When survey data showed that a large percentage of students watched three-to-four hours of television daily, teachers and parents adopted the Books and Beyond program. As a result, they not only enhanced the children's love of reading, but also significantly reduced television viewing time. Similarly, the Stearns' curriculum thrust for 1991-92 is to strengthen student's critical thinking skills by infusing higher order thinking strategies throughout the curriculum and by sharing these strategies with parents.

On several occasions, Stearns teachers expressed the opinion that they wanted time to fully implement and refine the curricular and other changes already begun before undertaking new work. Teachers have been through four exhilarating, exhausting, and sometimes frustrating years. Curriculum and

instructional innovation cannot be undertaken in a vacuum. The Stearns community will need to define what cognitive, affective, and psychomotor outcomes they expect all students to achieve sometime during their first six years of school. Then, Stearns can institute a regular plan for curriculum review and revision which is closely tied to assessment, staff development, and staff supervision.

Assessment and Reporting

The Stearns School Community works hard to ensure that students succeed. The foundation for that success is a positive self-image. To effect these outcomes, Stearns personnel communicate (via surveys, notes, telephone calls) with parents to learn about the strengths and special characteristics of each child. During the past two years, the Stearns community has modified its approach to parent conferences and pupil progress reports to emphasize the positive accomplishments of each student.

During its first three years, faculty developed an anecdotal report for each child at the conclusion of the first marking period. Parents received this report which, without exception, commented on their child's strengths. The anecdotal report met some, but not all of the needs expressed by Stearns teachers and parents. After two years of work, teachers and parents have received a waiver from the district's School Committee to pilot an alternative conference and reporting system.

The Stearns Reporting System Committee requested permission from the district's School Committee to change from the letter grades issued four times yearly, the purely anecdotal report, and two evening conferences. Instead, Stearns proposed three conferences (including daytime sessions) and a four page rating scale issued three times yearly (including both progress and effort marks interspersed with written comments). The Stearns' proposal offered the following rationale:

> Our community of learners, teachers, parents, and children at Stearns School is trying to create the best possible conditions for learning. We are attempting to help children acquire not only the academic and social skills necessary for success, but the intellectual curiosity and confidence necessary for success. We are trying to prepare children as best we can to become life-long learners (Proposal... Reporting System, 1990).

In that same paper, the Stearns Committee also took the position that "...elementary school is really not the place to be concerned with comparative achievement." Instead, they avowed that "It is our job to help them [children] gain the tools to discover their potential and encourage them to have the willingness to use those skills." The new Stearns report cards are prepared in November, March, and June of each year.

Stearns has used part of its Carnegie money for substitutes to make possible an additional parent conference (for a total of three) and to offer daytime

conference appointments to parents. Students participate in these conferences and in June discuss their own progress through a review of portfolios and completed projects. The new reporting system and the related conferences concentrate on individual student growth and positive accomplishments rather than performance relative to class, school, or other norms.

Stearns faculty are focusing increased attention on student and program assessment. They have applied for district funding to conduct their own two-week summer inservice on alternate student assessment strategies. At present, the staff relies on the results of the California Achievement Test (CAT), the Massachusetts Educational Assessment Program (MEAP), and a district-mandated end-of-year reading test. Although useful to varying degrees, none of these instruments matches closely Stearns' curricular goals. However, these measures are used by district policy and administrative leaders as well as the public to measure the success of Pittsfield's demonstration school. One Stearns staff member described the current state of affairs as an assessment quandary.

Staff opinions about assessments differ. At the time of the RBS site visit, the Full Faculty Team has just engaged in a spirited debate over the usefulness of the required end-of-year reading test. Some faculty argued that this late spring activity added little to their understanding of student reading accomplishments and needs. These teachers pointed out that the days students devote to this end-of-year exercise would be better spent reading. One saw the test primarily as a teacher accountability tool. Staff on either side of the issue acknowledged that the results, if considered at all, had minimal impact on current year programs or on students' Individual Education Plans. Supporters of the traditional test believed that some standard measure is needed to assess student and class progress in reading. They understood the central office interest in comparative school performance. However, proponents of the reading test concurred with their anti-test colleagues about the desirability of identifying less intrusive and time consuming assessment methods which were more relevant to their model.

Stearns and other restructuring schools face an assessment dilemma. On the one hand, the school seeks to evaluate staff in terms of its primary goals. To date, these have centered around means to ends (e.g., increasing individual attention to students, boosting student self-image/confidence, and fashioning a community of children and adult "learners and leaders"). Countervailing Stearns' interest in being evaluated on its own near-term goals is external pressure to succeed on the conventional measures used to judge school performance (e.g., standardized test results). The faculty recognizes the need both to remain true to its own vision and to produce traditional results. Stearns is moving simultaneously in two directions. First, the faculty has aligned curriculum and instruction with current testing programs. Concurrently, Stearns is seeking alternative methods of assessing student progress.

Toward the goal of more authentic assessment, the kindergarten teacher has recently developed a new reading assessment model. It reflects closely the school's literature-based emphasis. The model includes a reading/writing developmental checklist. In devising this instrument, this teacher culled checklist items from several sources and combined these with her own ideas to formulate

appropriate assessment questions for the primary reading program. To augment the developmental checklist, students prepare reading audio tapes and compile writing portfolios. These assessment materials will move with them and be added to as they progress through the grades. This initial alternate assessment effort will be refined and built upon during the staff's summer workshop. Interest is high among the Stearns' faculty in valid and reliable portfolio rating scales, project demonstration assessment strategies, and the recording of student self-selected choices in class.

To supplement current standardized test assessments, Stearns reports publicly on several indirect measures of the school's impact. These include applications for enrollment and average daily attendance. Stearns also uses questionnaires to solicit parent and staff opinions on the school's effectiveness.

Parent/Community Participation

The Stearns restructuring model includes a strong commitment to parent involvement. Parents have an active voice in school governance via The Stearns Coalition (TSC) and the School-Based Management Team (SBMT). Stearns' volunteer program is an organized and purposeful vehicle that directs parental interest toward palpable outcomes.

Stearns parents write grant applications, lead faculty-parent subcommittees commissioned by the Steering Committee, and organize fundraising. They build classroom storage and play areas, construct outdoor learning stations, tutor children in class, and substitute teach. Parents also coordinate special projects such as RIF/Books and Beyond and plan family oriented after school activities. At Stearns, so many adults regularly work in classrooms that parent class visits attract little, if any, notice. The Stearns faculty contact parents regularly about student progress and accomplishments.

A parent survey administered in June 1990 asked respondents to compare Stearns' performance on 25 elements. Rating possibilities ranged from 0 (Never) to 5 (Always). "Don't know" (6) was also a response option. Survey items 18-25 dealt with Stearns' communication with and involvement of parents. The following items received either a rating of 4 (Almost Always) or 5 (Always) in each of the two years

	1989	1990
• Routinely communicates educational goals to parents	56%	68%
• Good communication between parents and school	72%	76%
• Total school community involved in an ongoing process of establishing, articulating, and reviewing values and goals	79%	76%
• School staff involves parents and community in the educational programs of school	82%	83%
• School plans activities to match needs and interests	46%	68%

	1989	1990
• Parents and other community members participate in in-school learning activities as volunteers or tutors	75%	80%
• Majority of parents participate in parent involvement activities	50%	61%
• School establishes positive relationships with parents and community	81%	85%

(Note: Number/percentage of respondents are not reported.)

(Stearns End-of-Year Evaluation, 1990)

A powerful feature of the Stearns restructuring model is that parents apply to send their children to the school. Anecdotal evidence suggests that some parents work behind the scenes to secure a place at Stearns for their child. Unlike regular neighborhood schools, the Stearns School is more market sensitive. The school has a special aura as a demonstration site and as a Carnegie grant recipient. It also enjoys a reputation for turning around previously unsuccessful learners. Parents have a strong commitment to ensuring Stearns' success. Their extraordinary involvement level helps fulfill the positive expectations they hold for this "choice" school.

The Children

Nearly 200 children attend the Stearns School in grades K-5. Approximately half are bused from the Egremont section of Pittsfield. Forty percent reside in the Stearns neighborhood. The remainder are from other district schools. Ninety-eight percent of the students are Caucasian. Relative to the district average, Stearns has a high percentage (approximately one in four) of students from low socioeconomic backgrounds.

Children who attend Stearns readily communicate a sense of ownership of their school. Both in planned meetings with the RBS consultant and in a 20-minute, spontaneous, after school conversation, Stearns students spoke about their school being "better" and "special." They volunteered information about weekly gatherings, town meetings, their school constitution, and class meetings to support their assertions about Stearns.

Stearns students speak with pride about being involved in school matters. They cite examples of their influence. In one instance, two grade five students commented that they changed their home base teacher's less than enthusiastic view of class meetings. Interestingly, the day before this teacher had made a similar point about his students' positive influence. He recounted that after a few polite weeks of waiting, his students made it clear they expected him to hold class meetings. He has since come to value these sessions as a teaching opportunity. Other students reported how their Town Meeting idea for a talent show was currently being considered by the Full Faculty Committee. Elected class representatives are responsible for relaying back to classmates faculty responses to student proposals. These representatives must also communicate the

rationale for a proposal's rejection. Older Stearns students vividly recall their constitutional convention two years ago. They report using the constitution as a reference point for class discussion. (Note: Some school traditions are more impervious to democratic influence than others. Notwithstanding authoring the school constitution, several student leaders did not believe that the Student Forum could really improve cafeteria food!)

A visit with students impresses one with their sense of ownership for Stearns. Those students who have attended other public and non-public schools make trenchant comparisons to illustrate Stearns' superiority. One fourth grade student spoke poignantly about how Stearns teachers give "slower kids extra chances to learn." She contrasted this approach to her remembered experience at another school where "...if you didn't learn it the first time, you failed." A minority student, awaiting a much delayed bus, boasted that she had gotten into trouble at her former school in town and as a result was repeating her current grade. At Stearns she felt that she was doing much better. This student's bright smile and engaging personality spoke volumes about Stearns' focus on building positive student attitudes.

Teachers at Stearns report that their students are more thoughtful and reflective than others whom they have taught. Their pupils also are more willing to take risks. Staff theorized that these outcomes occur when young people feel positive about themselves and when adults model similar behavior and attitudes. Students eagerly explained their work to the RBS consultant. Stearns students appear to be comfortable making choices and evaluating the results of their decisions.

Discussion of the Stearns Restructuring Model

Stearns has developed the capacity to change. At its core, this is the school's restructuring model. The Stearns community recognizes that restructuring is not an event with an end point. Rather, restructuring is an ongoing, often arduous process. Therefore, in discussing restructuring at the Stearns Elementary School, one takes a snapshot of an evolving initiative. By no means fully formed, the Stearns model is nonetheless sufficiently developed to discern similarities with other school restructuring efforts. It also has sufficient history to reflect on the degree to which its elements comport with RBS' working definition of restructuring.

At Stearns, restructuring is analogous to a quest. Principal, teachers, students, parents, business community, superintendent, School Committee, and community are journeying together in pursuit of an emerging educational vision. Each sees the vision through lenses of varying contours. Along the way, all of these stakeholders are acquiring new ideas, strategies, skills, knowledge, and insight. Such acquisitions sharpen their individual and collective discernment of the vision.

Current Status

To date, Stearns has successfully reached several milestones on its quest. Stearns has articulated its philosophy, goals, and objectives. The school community has developed plans of action, forged a collaborative faculty group, formed a participatory governance structure, fostered teacher/student cooperative learning, modified some curricular areas, and increased parent participation in school operations. The amount and quality of the work undertaken in four years is impressive. Yet much that is critical to systemic change remains to be done.

Like many other restructuring models, Stearns has attempted to:

- involve teachers and parents in shared-decisionmaking
- reduce the ratio of students to adults
- employ cooperative teaching and learning strategies
- foster closer student/teacher/parent relationships
- recruit/retain dedicated teachers
- involve businesses as partners in education.

Perhaps more than most other efforts, the Stearns model concentrated initially on individual student needs and each child's positive self-image. The undergirding rationale for all of its restructuring goals is helping students achieve academic success. However, this concept remains ill-defined. During the initial years, academics appear to have been of secondary importance to student self-image.

The school staff at Stearns have done much with very limited resources. For the most part, they continue to discover their meaning of restructuring. District support (and lately recognition) is limited and current fiscal constraints threaten school staff and programs. Important accomplishments have been achieved to date, especially the creation of a nurturing, leadership-enhancing learning environment. Stearns has begun to change its dominant instructional curricular patterns, but it has not yet addressed the higher order outcomes it expects for all students.

Stearns has, however, positioned itself very well to "up the ante" regarding fundamental reform. In four hectic, draining years, Stearns has begun to modify its rules, roles, and relationships in pursuit of ill-defined but abstractly valued results of a substantially different order.

Rules

Although Stearns existed as a traditional elementary school at one time, its reopening in 1967 constituted the commissioning of a new school. Rules which govern Stearns were jointly designed by the principal, faculty, and parents. Leadership was to be shared. Decisions were to be made consensually whenever feasible. Experimentation, risk taking, and collaboration were to be normative. Parents would choose to send their children to Stearns. The new Stearns opened with, and for the most part has operated according to, these original rules.

On occasion, the School Committee and the district's teachers' association have permitted some rule changes. The union has agreed to teachers additional work (e.g., after school monthly sharing) and pay as part of the Carnegie grant. Stearns has received permission from the School Committee to pilot its report card and parent conference innovations. No other rule waivers were mentioned during the RBS consultant's visit. The written materials are silent on this topic.

Rule changes appear to be a topic which has not been systematically explored in Pittsfield's demonstration model. For example, the issue of autonomy for this experimental restructuring school has not been formalized through district policy. This may be a sensitive topic which district policymakers consider better left unaddressed. However, this ambiguity results in Stearns' staff and parents lacking clear guidelines about which decisions they can make and which must be sent "up the line" to the central office and the School Committee. This avoidance of the governance/autonomy issue adds unnecessary "drag" to the natural friction that is endemic to school restructuring.

Critical to the future of Stearns is the issue of contractual seniority. Since 1980, Pittsfield has closed half of its school buildings in the face of major enrollment declines. Massachusetts currently faces a fiscal crisis which will reduce state aid to Pittsfield. The community is facing its own resource shortfall. In May 1991, four of the eight Stearns classroom teachers had been "pink slipped" on seniority grounds. Morale was clearly suffering. This closely-knit group which together had forged the Stearns model now faced major personnel changes. Involuntarily transferred teachers who may or may not ascribe to Stearns' philosophy or work ethos could suddenly appear in September. A critical rule waiver shielding demonstration model school staff from contractual bumping had never been negotiated. What likely could have occurred in 1986-87 at the start up of Stearns today presents an unimaginable union concession in the face of imminent layoffs.

The Stearns School must participate in all district and state testing programs. As noted earlier, Stearns teachers are questioning the need for end-of-year reading tests. The central office supervisors require its use. It is unclear what will happen if the Full Faculty and School-based Management Team decide not to administer the test. Weak performance of 25 children on the 1990 CAT resulted in Stearns being publicly criticized by a School Committee member and by invidious school-by-school comparisons in the press. Stearns is in a "catch 22" situation. As it succeeds with difficult learners, more such children are attracted to Stearns. For example, the grade 2 class which performed poorly on the 1990 CAT included nine students with various learning disabilities. As a demonstration school, Stearns could have been allowed for its first few years to use assessment measures more closely aligned with its curriculum objectives. Without this grace period, Stearns faces increasing pressure to scale back innovation and teach to the lower-order skills measured by multiple choice tests.

Without explicit rule changes (e.g., decentralized budget, a testing moratorium, contractual waivers to protect demonstration school personnel, formal peer evaluation, hiring/firing by the SBMT), restructuring schools face a

tenuous existence. Stearns is no exception. Its fragile ecology has no buffers. To fundamentally redesign a school while leaving intact rules which perpetuate the status quo may be inherently self-defeating.

Roles

Stearns has transformed the roles of all of its school-based stakeholders. This change was purposeful; it grew out of the founding vision of a "community of leaders and learners" who "learn through cooperation." At Stearns, teachers, students, and parents have been freed to assume multiple roles. In observable ways, roles have already become less bounded. With official support and a modicum of discretionary resources, members of the Stearns community could explore and mature in other roles to a much greater degree.

The principal at Stearns, without abrogating the leadership or management dimensions of her primary role, has groomed staff to share in both dimensions. For the most part, the Full Faculty Team and the Steering Committee determine how the school will operate. In a classroom routinely populated by several other adults, teachers must manage others. Some staff have expressed discomfort in this administrator role. However, most speak with pride about their ability to teach and manage. Teachers secure funding, initiate change, train peers, and serve as clinical supervisors. Stearns' principal fosters the growth of her colleagues' administrative and leadership skills.

Teachers and principals are learners as well as leaders. They actively seek out the latest research on how children learn, and on teaching and curricular innovation. To formalize this learning role, staff meet regularly to share with one another what they have discovered. Each teacher is paid for planning one session annually. All are paid for their participation. Stearns staff reportedly commit far more time than other district teachers to professional growth and development. Another example of staff-initiated professional development is a two-week workshop on alternate pupil assessment scheduled for this summer. "Learner" is a legitimate role for Stearns' teachers. Systems exist to facilitate and positively reinforce this role behavior.

Stearns faculty seek to help their students become active, self-directed learners. Students are coached to plan, inquire, organize, assess, synthesize, and evaluate. Big Brothers/Big Sisters teach, share, and explain. All students are invited to reflect on school rules, procedures, and activities. At Stearns, children make choices in class. Some learning stations are "must do's," but many are "wanna do's." Limitations imposed by bus schedules and the absence of adequate technology blunt the school's objective to modify students' traditional role of passive learner to some extent. Before and after-school access to a technology/media center and a classroom and media center computer network would effect dramatic changes in students' role. Stearns staff have well positioned their pupils to take advantage of such resources.

Parents, too, have taken on new roles at Stearns. As partners in restructuring, they are expected to lead and learn. Parents do lead academic subcommittees. They participate fully on the School-Based Management Team and on the Steering Committee. They have prepared grant applications. And parents have

enjoyed learning more about teaching and learning by serving as volunteer aides and by participating in paid practicum experiences. Stearns parents are involved in school decisions and clearly do much for the school. One senses, however, a bit of retrenchment on the part of staff regarding sharing decision-making with parents. One indication of this may be the emergence of the Full Faculty Team as the pre-eminent decisionmaking group; parents are not members of the Full Faculty Team.

Relationships

Relationships are difficult to discern fully after a brief exposure to a social system. Unlike rules, roles, and results, relationships usually are not formalized in writing. Group members infrequently reflect in public upon their interactions and interdependence. However, at Stearns one senses that teacher, parent, student, and administrator relationships are atypical and quite effective.

Teachers are the energy source of the Stearns experiment. Most volunteered to build a model school. According to the superintendent, the original Stearns teacher cadre shared a dissatisfaction with regular educational practice; they were disposed to experimentation and risk taking. These able but "disgruntled" educators helped hire their principal and then forged a bond with her in the summer and fall of 1987, as together they gave "birth" to their school.

Whether a result of the school's small size or of the camaraderie forged through sharing a herculean effort, Stearns staff exude a sense of family. They exchange knowing glances in response to shared history. They "get it off their chest" behind closed doors. They disagree and invest variable amounts of energy and psychic commitment to their Carnegie school. However, they acknowledge their interdependence through the norms of sharing what each learns, practicing situational leadership, and modeling the cooperative behaviors they seek to develop in their students.

A striking example of changed professional relationships at Stearns is that teaching has been transformed from a private to a public function. Stearns faculty do not operate in isolation within the impermeable boundaries of a classroom. More like a professional laboratory school, teachers at Stearns communicate with one another about pedagogy and content. The steady stream of volunteers, specialists, interns, aides, colleagues, and students requires teachers to develop more collegial relationships. Due to their special commitment and obvious creativity, Stearns teachers appear to have enhanced a new paradigm for a public school staff more akin to a private professional practice. Tremendous potential exists here to push this concept further through decentralization of authority and resources to the Stearns faculty. One could imagine, under the rubric of "Demonstration Model," these educators incorporating and contracting with the School Committee to deliver educational services.

Teachers appear to value parents as teaching partners. The Stearns governance model fosters communication among the staff and the parent support group, The Stearns Coalition (i.e., School-Based Management Team, Steering Committee, and the Carnegie Committee). However, this collaborative disposition does not

extend to including parents as representatives on the Full Faculty Team or as participants, a la the Comer Model, in the weekly screening session. On the other hand, parent-teacher relationships appear exceptionally positive in light of volunteer time, the report card initiative, survey comments, and the parent practicum program. Teachers at Stearns communicate good news to parents, emphasize student strengths, and focus on children's individual rather than comparative growth. Perhaps because they both have "chosen" Stearns, parents and teachers are fashioning an unusual and productive partnership.

Students appear happy to attend the Stearns School. Some talk about their being able to do more here than in other schools. Others express pride in their Big Brother/Big Sister role. Many communicate enthusiasm for Town Forum and class meetings which afford them influence over their school environment. Stearns "smiles." This impression has to do with good relationships among young people and their adult mentors. Teachers consciously try to foster student self-confidence, self-image, and independence. Students at Stearns are being prepared to learn and lead by skillful and caring staff. Interviews with approximately 15 students suggest strongly how much students value their relationship with their teachers.

The principal of Stearns enjoys authority based on expertise and effort rather than on role status. She simultaneously shares authority and acts authoritatively to cut through bottlenecks. Whereas Stearns' engine is powered by teachers, the principal provides purposeful direction to this energy.

Catalyst and coach, praiser and prodder, this democratic manager has established a relationship of mutual respect with her colleagues. The teachers and principal at Stearns jointly lead and continually learn together. They began their work in 1987 with a weekend retreat, voluntarily gather each summer, and look forward to again "going away" to consider mid-course corrections. Respect allows room for differences of opinion and flexibility of approach. Clearly, staff are not forced to change practices and do not do so until there is a sufficient comfort level. Shared-decisionmaking constitutes their modus operandi. This approach appears to have resulted in strong, satisfying relationships among the adults who work at Stearns.

Results

The Stearns School three year review (1987-88 to 1989-90) offers the following preamble regarding the "Effectiveness of the Model:"

> ...positive restructuring offers an instructional environment that is conducive to learning. As the environment evolves, progress is made and improvement will be reflected in test scores. Nowhere in the literature is there an example of instant improvement... As we continue to define and refine the model, it is expected that a clear pattern of improvement can be documented. (Learning Through Cooperation, 1990)

Pittsfield has not developed a comprehensive evaluation design for its demonstration model. Annually, the school does submit as part of its Carnegie grant application evaluation strategies for each of its four original goals. At present, few resources have been committed to program evaluation. For the most part, therefore, the school is "evaluated" in terms of comparative performance on district-wide tests.

An important exception to this generalization about test-score-grounded evaluation is the school's "reputation." The superintendent enthusiastically points out that, "The parents love the school. They fight to get their kids in." He recognizes that a relatively high percentage of Stearns children have experienced difficulty in learning. In his opinion, Stearns is succeeding and the test scores will confirm his and the parents' positive evaluation.

Stearns performance on the CAT is "inconclusive." Generally, classes at Stearns exceed the district average. An anomaly occurred in grade 2 which, in 1990, registered "extremely" low achievement. As noted earlier, the second grade class contained a high percentage of students who were experiencing learning problems. An important factor which affects Stearns' performance relative to other district schools is its policy of testing every student. Some other elementary schools in the district exempt special education students from testing. In 1989, seven of Stearns' eight special education students passed math and six passed writing. Between 1987-88 and 1989-90, only two students did not meet the state passing level of 65 percent in reading, one scored below in math, and six in writing. Using the higher district standard of 80 percent, Stearns averaged 3.6, 2.3, and 7.0 "failures" during this period in reading, math, and writing.

An analysis of CAT results shows Stearns students with strong performance in science, language expression, and reading vocabulary and comprehension. Areas of weakness are math computation and spelling. These results are consistent with the staff's emphasis on scientific processes and the integration of reading and writing instruction with science. The staff have also emphasized quality literature and journal writing and have de-emphasized workbooks. According to the principal, one class' poor math performance is apparently related to ineffective instruction provided by a former teacher whose stay at Stearns was short-lived.

Results of the Massachusetts Educational Assessment Program (MEAP) suggest that Stearns is beginning to translate its positive learning environment into improved student performance on traditional measures. MEAP is administered annually in grade 4. Stearns' first results, six months after opening, were comparatively poor (see Appendix F, F-1). To moderate the effect of small class size, the district has combined 1988 and 1989 grade 4 cohorts. The 1989 results thus reconstructed are much higher (see Appendix F, F-2). However, the test does confirm weakness in math and sociocultural environment.

Stearns' grade 4 MEAP results show significant overall improvement. For example, the 1989 grade 4 students (albeit a small sample size) equal or exceed the state comparison score bands in 21 of 24 test categories. (See Appendix F,

F-3.) Overall performance on MEAP testing in 1988 and 1989 improved dramatically after the school had been operational for approximately one and one-half years. (See Appendix G.)

A comparison of Stearns' MEAP results in 1988 and 1990 reveals that the school made significant gains* in all areas of weakness identified in 1988:

		1988	1990
Reading	Average Score	1270	1410
Mathematics	Average Score	1260	1360
Science	Average Score	1250	1390
Social Studies	Average Score	1240	1390

*Note: The maximum score on any MEAP test section is 1600.

Notwithstanding these overall gains on the MEAP, Stearns has targeted 17 sub-skill areas in which student performance remains weak (see Appendix H). An action plan has been implemented to address each area of weakness.

Student test data are not disaggregated by race, sex, socioeconomic status (SES), years at Stearns, or any other criteria. In response to a specific question concerning the academic performance of low SES students, the principal maintained that all are making significant progress. To support this assertion, she described the progress of five current grade 5 students who are eligible for the federal free/reduced cost lunch program. Between grades 3 and 5, these students' relative class standing (N=25) on the annual CAT improved considerably. Each moved from the bottom quartile to the middle of their class' score distribution. Stearns is a small school; one gets the impression that the principal and staff have good "mental files" about each student's progress.

Stearns' second goal is to strengthen student self-image. Several indirect measures point to Stearns' effectiveness. Average daily attendance at Stearns over a three-year period is 3.96 percent compared to 6.76 percent district-wide. Applications for grades 1-5 exceed openings over this same time period 152 to 42. Parent questionnaire comments often include specific mention of the school's positive atmosphere and how children are made to feel good about themselves and their abilities. Also, specific parent questionnaire items dealing with student growth and self-image have successively received higher ratings each year. Staff rate the school's climate highly (8 on a 0-10 scale) and underscore its "affective emphasis."

The other major Carnegie goals which Stearns evaluates have more to do with inputs and process. Goal 3 focuses on challenging expectations for students and staff. Goal 4 addresses the use of additional resources to monitor each child's progress and to prescribe appropriate learning activities. Anecdotal and empirical data indicate that Stearns has been effective in these areas. This is especially true in Goal 4, where the lowering of pupil to adult ratios has helped staff monitor individual student growth. While expectations for students and staff have been "challenging" in many respects, the challenge has not yet been concretized in terms of explicit student outcome measures.

Stearns has also begun to fulfill its demonstration model school mission. Other schools in Pittsfield have adopted the Stearns Integrated Services Model. Stearns' environmental curriculum and trails are also being used by other schools. In addition, Stearns regularly hosts visitors from other districts and from area colleges. The principal has shared the Stearns restructuring model with numerous professional associations.

Efficacy of the Stearns Model

"Restructuring, is a conjuntive concept," according to H. Dickson Corbett of RBS. He explains that "restructuring... represents a fundamental change in the social composition of a school district, engaged in for the purpose of producing different results. In other words, restructuring involves alterations in the patterns of rules, roles, relationships, and results that comprise organizational operation." Corbett also maintains that "restructuring is a district-wide event... unlikely to happen effectively without school district involvement." (Corbett, 1990.)

The Stearns model for restructuring comports with much of Corbett's definition. Substantial changes have been and are being made in the rules, roles, and relationships which govern the school's operations. For this reason, Stearns qualified as a SIRIUS-A Project school engaged in systematic restructuring (Reigeluth, Norris & Ryan, 1990). Conspicuously absent from Stearns' model, however, is clarity about significantly different results. It is the desire for such results which necessitates a fundamental change in the pattern of rules, roles, and relationships. Restructuring as a district-wide event featuring district involvement is another restructuring characteristic generally absent from the Stearns model. On balance, however, Stearns is grappling with systemic change rather than merely tinkering around the edges of reform.

In some respect, Stearns resembles a typical "good" elementary school. The atmosphere is inviting and children are engaged and friendly. Hallways and classrooms are alive with activity; adults are enthusiastic and hard working. Students acquire intended knowledge, skills, and attitudes because adults coordinate instruction, curriculum, assessment, and supervision. For the most part, the enterprise is planned and purposeful.

What distinguishes Stearns as an unusual school is that everyone associated with the school, from youth to adults, knows that their school is special. For the newest members this insight may not extend beyond awareness of the dignified blue sign on the lawn proclaiming Stearns a Carnegie School. This celebratory sign acknowledges the school's business partners and, on engraved lucite panels, displays the name of each staff member. Older children and adults are clearly aware of their schools uniqueness. They talk about Stearns being a model school. This consciousness is not "restructuring," but it contributes to a fertile environment for redesigning a school.

Stearns' experiment can be likened to concentric ripples in a pond. The ripples started from a stone hitting the water in 1987. A commitment to the intellectual, emotional, social, and physical growth of each child constitutes

the stone. This stone was tossed because a handful of committed, dissatisfied, and talented adults were afforded an unusual opportunity to establish their own school. Never losing sight of their particular stone, they embellished each circle with a dimension of restructuring.

Perhaps shared governance is the oldest and, therefore, first circle one sees when looking at the Stearns section of Pittsfield Pond. Rippling close behind is a host of strategies to bolster each student's confidence and self-image. At various arcs along this second wave one sees student choices in class, teachers as guides rather than sages, and student forums and town meetings. Other arcs along the second circle reveal hands-on learning, Big Brothers/Big Sisters, and weekly screenings to catch problems early. This broad circle also carries with it low student-to-adult ratios, and a theme ("Community of Learners and Leaders") applicable to children.

A third major ripple contains Stearns' efforts to expand the staff's instructional repertoire and to develop curriculum which captivates young learners. Riding the crest of wave three are an ecology curriculum and a science program which encourages students to touch, see, measure, and wonder. Waterlogged dittos sink beneath the third crest while buoyant activity centers stimulate students' interest and choice making. In this third wave, quality children's literature replaces formulaic, basal readings. Teachers ask "why and what if" more often than "who, when, and what."

From the original stone flows additional circles. These subsequent ripples carry along parents and other volunteers and business partners into the Stearns environment. Perhaps a bit less energized than the first few waves, these, too, are visible in Stearns' section of the Pittsfield Pond.

Wave imagery can also be instructive to describe missing or less visible elements in the Stearns Restructuring Model. Stearns' pond stone has not generated an observable wave of specific student outcomes to direct its restructuring activities. Such a wave would give shape to the underlying pond currents implicit in the phrases "academic success," "student self-image," "commitment to individual student needs," and "model school." Stearns would benefit by explicitly stating what its students should know and be able to do upon exiting the school.

The lack of outcome specificity leads to uncertainty regarding pupil assessment and program evaluation. At the moment, Stearns is constrained with traditional test measures and their de-energizing effect on the school's restructuring efforts. For example, how should Stearns interpret and respond to weak math computation results? Should dittos be salvaged from the bottom of the pond and dried off? Absent exit performance standards and periodic benchmarks, Stearns will have difficulty assessing the success of its model on its own terms.

The momentum of Stearns' waves upon the larger Pittsfield body of water may be dissipating. Perhaps a larger stone or several stones are needed to create enough energy and movement to effect systemic change that produces substantially different results district-wide. By no means is it too late for Stearns and

Pittsfield to define what results will prepare children to succeed, first in middle and high school and later as mid-21st century adults.

Now that Carnegie funds are no longer available, it is also timely for Pittsfield to provide Stearns with additional district funding to implement its restructuring model. Business and industry invest heavily in research and development. To expect a demonstration school to invent a new educational paradigm without any extraordinary cost to the district is unrealistic. Without successive restructuring waves funded by local dollars, Stearns' initial waves funded by Carnegie will become increasingly less perceptible.

Restructuring is exhausting, long term work. More than dedication is needed to sustain Stearns' restructuring initiative. Technology, staff retreats, extra substitutes, early and late buses, satellite dishes, and portfolio assessment are part of schools of the future. Some of these elements initially cost more. Others can be covered with existing dollars by changing the way current funds are used.

Staff who throw themselves into a multi-year restructuring effort need recognition and stability. Job insecurity is inimical to creativity. Demonstration schools and their personnel may require contractual and policy waivers if they are reasonably to be expected to change the paradigm. In short, a new and larger stone is needed for Stearns. Fresh waves of energy will keep the educational lake at Pittsfield from becoming mirror-like in once again only reflecting that which exists.

The efficacy or power of the Stearns restructuring model is strong, but not sufficiently strong to produce a new order of results. This is not suprising. Stearns started in part as an administrative solution to a non-educational problem. It began with an initial energy burst and has been driven by a passionate commitment to individual children. Year by year, this experiment has incorporated promising elements from the literature on school change. Action is Stearns' hallmark; however, reflection and strategic planning time may currently be its greater needs.

Stearns is already a special, even magical place. This school has paid its dues as a restructuring charter member. The community at Stearns has accomplished much and can be proud of the nurturing environment it offers children. The veteran personnel and parents at Stearns are now ideally positioned to use supplemental district R&D money to push their demonstration beyond relatively safe intra-school changes. Teachers, parents, and businesspersons are seasoned partners who can transform Stearns' obvious promise into a model restructured learning community. The Stearns community has earned the opportunity to proceed with their quest.

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Reigeluth, C. M., Norris, C. A., & Ryan, D. F. (1990). SIRIUS -- a project: Progress Report. (School Improvement Resources Inquiry -- USA). September 1990. Bloomington, IN: Indiana Department of Education, School Improvement Center.

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APPENDIX A

Proposed Workscope for Gary Reece

APPENDIX A

Proposed Workscope for Gary Reece

Provide a written report of models of effective school restructuring with particular emphasis on conceptual design of restructuring models, outcomes/assessment measures, systemic change in schools/systems, the impact of the model on the teaching/learning process (particularly for at-risk students), and the extent of increased achievement. The report should be based on (1) a review of the pertinent aspects of RBS' Technical Proposal and other RBS documents on restructuring, (2) a search of the literature for examples of models of effective school restructuring, and (3) a visit to a promising restructuring project in progress and a description of the project.

APPENDIX B

Letter to Linda Porter

esearch for Better Schools
44 North Third Street
hiladelphia, Pennsylvania
9123-4107

15-574-9300

APPENDIX B

May 8, 1991

Ms. Linda J. Porter
Principal, Stearns School
75 Lebanon Avenue
Pittsfield, MA 01201

Dear Ms. Porter,

This is a follow-up to our recent conversation concerning my proposed visit with you and your colleagues at the Stearns Elementary School. The purpose of this visit is to gather information about an ongoing school restructuring effort. Findings from my site visit will be incorporated into a report that I am preparing for Research for Better Schools, Inc. (RBS), the Mid-Atlantic Regional Educational Laboratory in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

RBS has recently begun implementing a five-year plan to improve education for at-risk students. The short term consultant work I am doing for RBS will contribute to the lab's knowledge base about school restructuring models, effective implementation strategies and the impact on student outcomes. My report will be shaped in terms of RBS' definition of restructuring: "Altering the patterns of rules, roles and relationships in order to achieve substantially different results."

As we discussed, the visit to your school would be for two consecutive days. During that time, I would like to speak with teachers, parents, and administrators about their model for restructuring, its impact on students and adults, and the lessons which have been learned. In advance of the visit, I would like to prepare by reading any written school plans, descriptions or interim assessments you consider informative.

The itinerary for my visit is probably best left for you and the faculty to decide. I am sensitive to the problem of finding time to meet during a busy school day. The following thoughts about how a complete visit could be structured are offered so that you and your colleagues can decide what activities would work best for you:

I. Prior to Visit

A. Professional and support staff and selected parents receive a copy of our correspondence.

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B. School forwards background reading materials to consultant.

C. Principal and consultant meet for dinner the evening prior to visit to clarify background information and to confirm the itinerary.

II. Day One of Visit

A. Before school, principal introduces consultant to faculty during an informal ("drop in if you can") coffee and pastry session.

B. School tour (Note: Could be conducted by students who might be invited to "tell our visitor what's special or neat about how people in our school learn and teach.") Other tour leader options include principal and/or teachers, PTA leadership, central office administration, support staff.

C. Class visits - Either impromptu or planned to illustrate some restructuring tenet.

D. Lunch and/or lunch duty with teachers.

E. Discussion with principal/team leaders/building union representative. Check preliminary perceptions.

F. After school meeting with full faculty.

G. Dinner with 2-3 key restructuring leaders from the school.

III. Day Two of Visit

A. Interview with key central office (possibly board of education) "players" in school restructuring effort.

B. Discussion with teachers in the Faculty Room (Unscheduled, informal chats during their preparation period).

C. Lunch with 6-8 students from upper grades. (Volunteers who would like to meet the "guest" and tell him about our school or ask questions about his work.)

D. Debriefing with principal and others. (Consultant will check the validity of findings/impressions and offer observations about school's restructuring work.)

E. Depart at the end of the school day.

IV. After the Visit

A. Consultant will send a draft copy of relevant section of his RBS report to check for accuracy.

B. Consultant will send a final copy of report to RBS.

Again, please feel free to modify the preceding schedule to fit your school community's rules, roles, relationships, and "realities".

My tentative plan is to visit your school between May 20-23. I would arrive the evening before and stay at any nearby hotel you recommend. The school will incur no cost for my visit. RBS is pleased to cover the expenses for morning refreshments and for our dinner meetings. I will call on Tuesday, May 14 to confirm these arrangements, discuss your itinerary suggestions and answer any questions you may have.

Again, thanks for agreeing to assist Research for Better Schools in its efforts to support the restructuring efforts of schools within the mid-Atlantic region. Should you wish to discuss this proposal directly with the leadership at RBS please feel free to contact either Dr. Arnold Webb, Director, Urban Education or Dr. John Connolly, Deputy Director of RBS at 215-574-9300. I look forward to visiting your school community.

Sincerely,

Gary T. Reece
Project Consultant

cc: Arnold Webb
John Connolly

GR:kaf

APPENDIX C

Stearns School Philosophy

APPENDIX C

Stearns School Philosophy

THIS WE BELIEVE...

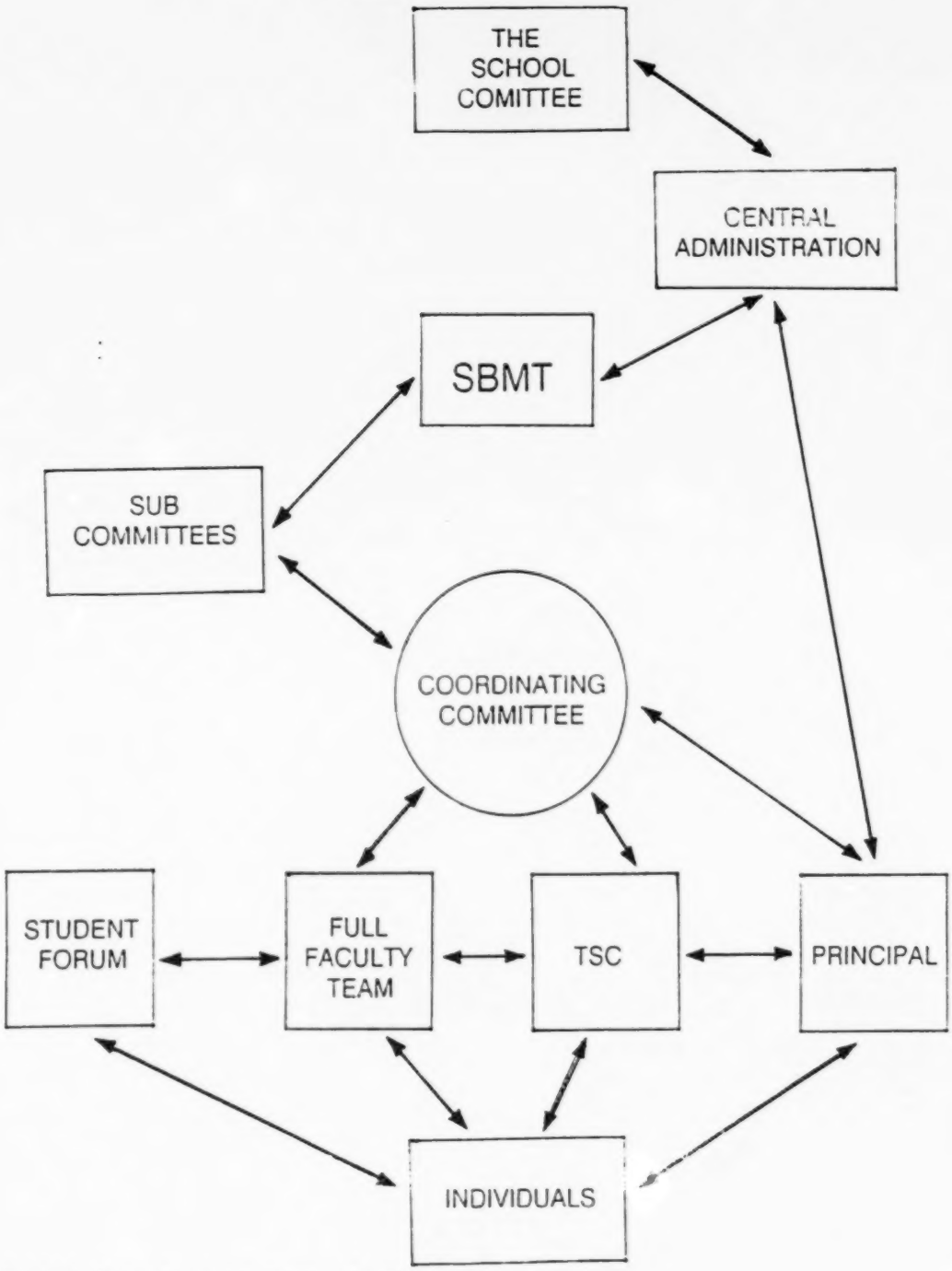
- that we are striving to create a stimulating environment for learning in which all our children have equal access to quality education.
- that all children can learn, and that every child should be helped to develop his or her abilities to full potential.
- that we are a learning community in which everyone is both a teacher and a student.
- that children learn best when they feel they are respected and recognized as individuals.
- that children vary in their needs, interests, and readiness for learning.
- that learning requires the active involement of students with their total environment.
- that when children experience success, a better opportunity exists for them to develop intellectually, socially, and emotionally.
- that learning requires the development of a sense of responsibility.
- that teachers play a key role in decisions that affect student learning.
- that teachers enhance children's opportunities for successful progress by providing flexible methods of instruction, grouping, and measurement of growth in a secure environment.
- that teachers grow as professionals through reflection, dialogue, and the study of current research.
- that parental involvement helps children learn more effectively.
- that parents will join us in encouraging, extending, and celebrating what children do as learners.
- that utilizing community/business resources will increase opportunities for student learning as well as increase the likelihood of an informed citizenry.
- that the ultimate goal of education is the development of faith in ourselves and our children as learners, and the confidence to think critically and creatively.

APPENDIX D

Stearns Carnegie Year 3

APPENDIX D

Stearns Carnegie Year 3



Adapted from Stearns Carnegie Year 3, p. 32.

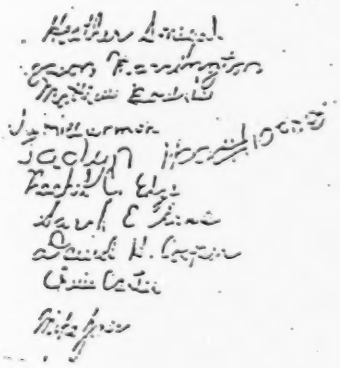
APPENDIX E

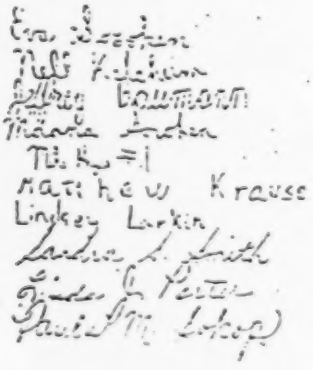
Stearns School Constitution

Stearns School Constitution

We, the students and staff, as a community and individually, do ordain and establish this constitution for Stearns School.

- We will treat other people the way we would like to be treated.
- We will use proper language.
- We will welcome visitors to the place where we are taught.
- We will take pride in treating the school environment kindly.
- We will expect the best from everyone.





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APPENDIX F

Summary of Test Results

Massachusetts Educational Assessment Program

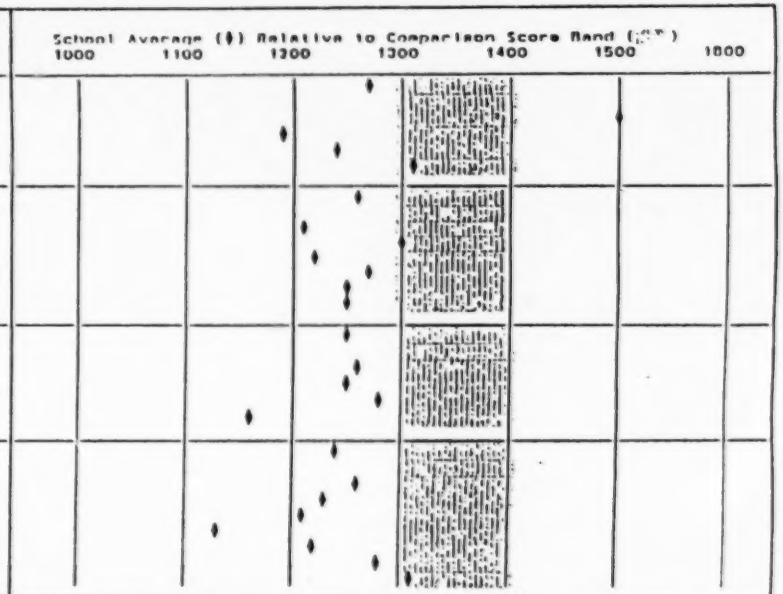
SUMMARY OF TEST RESULTS

District: Pittsfield
School: Stearns Elementary
Grade: 4
Date: April, 1988

Scaled scores allow you to compare your results to the statewide average. For example, your scaled score of 1270 in reading means that the average score of the students in this school was less than the statewide average. Scaled scores also allow you to compare your results in one content area to another. For example, the average score of the students in this school was lower in mathematics than reading. Scaled scores also allow you to compare your results to those of previous years. If available, the results for this school on the 1985-86 assessment are provided on page 8.

Comparison Score Bands allow you to compare your results to those of schools with similar background characteristics. For example, your scaled score in reading is below the range of the middle 50 percent of schools like yours.

Content Area	Average Test Score			Comparison Score Band
	State	District	School	
Reading	1300	1290	1270	1300-1400
Vocabulary	1300	1300	1500	
Literal Comprehension	1300	1290	1190	
Inferential Comprehension	1300	1300	1240	
Study Skills	1300	1290	1310	
Mathematics	1300	1280	1280	1300-1390
Numbers/Numeration	1300	1280	1210	
Operations	1300	1250	1300	
Variables/Relations	1300	1240	1220	
Measurement/Geometry	1300	1250	1270	
Problem Solving Skills	1300	1280	1250	
Probability/Statistics	1300	1290	1250	
Science	1300	1280	1250	1310-1400
Scientific Inquiry	1300	1270	1260	
Life Science	1300	1310	1250	
Earth/Space Science	1300	1290	1280	
Physical Science	1300	1250	1160	
Social Studies	1300	1270	1240	1310-1400
Historical Environment	1300	1250	1260	
Political Environment	1300	1250	1230	
Physical Environment	1300	1260	1310	
Economic Environment	1300	1300	1130	
Sociocultural Environment	1300	1270	1220	
Process Skills	1300	1290	1280	
Clarifying, Evaluating, Using Info.	1300	1260	1310	



!!!CAUTION!!!
The results in this report are based upon a small number of students, and are likely to fluctuate significantly from year to year. See accompanying memorandum for information on the interpretation of results for small schools and districts.

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Massachusetts Educational Assessment Program

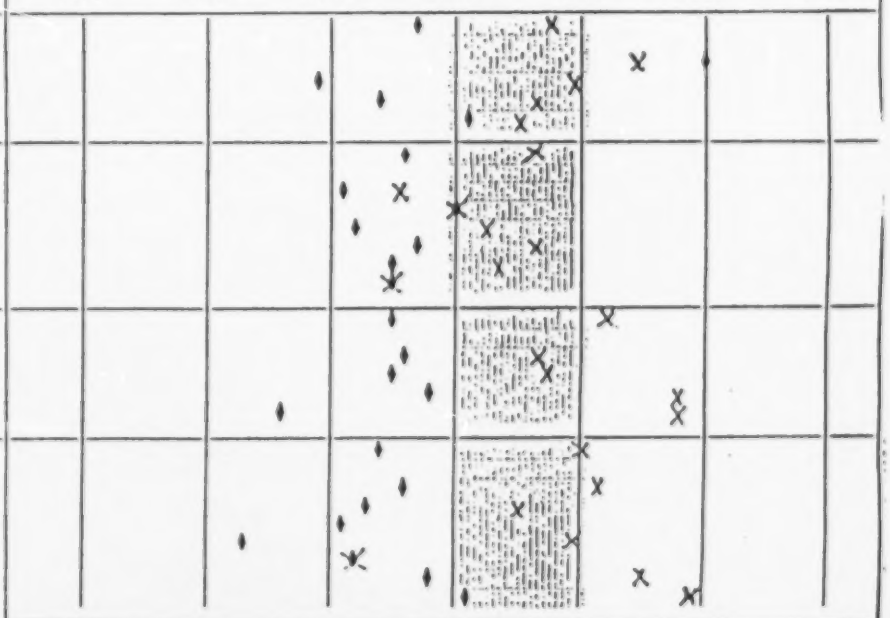
SUMMARY OF TEST RESULTS *

District: Pittsfield
School: Stearns Elementary
Grade: 4
Date: April 1988, 1989

Scaled scores allow you to compare your results to the statewide average. For example, your scaled score of 1270 in reading means that the average score of the students in this school was less than the statewide average. Scaled scores also allow you to compare your results in one content area to another. For example, the average score of the students in this school was lower in mathematics than reading. Scaled scores also allow you to compare your results to those of previous years. If available, the results for this school on the 1985-86 assessment are provided on page 8.

Comparison Score Bands allow you to compare your results to those of schools with similar background characteristics. For example, your scaled score in reading is below the range of the middle 50 percent of schools like yours.

Content Area	Average Test Score			Comparison Score Band
	State	District	School	
Reading	1300	1290	1270	1300-1400
Vocabulary	1300	1300	1500	
Literal Comprehension	1300	1290	1190	
Inferential Comprehension	1300	1300	1240	
Study Skills	1300	1290	1310	
Mathematics	1300	1280	1280	1300-1390
Numbers/Numeration	1300	1280	1210	
Operations	1300	1250	1300	
Variables/Relations	1300	1240	1220	
Measurement/Geometry	1300	1250	1270	
Problem Solving Skills	1300	1280	1250	
Probability/Statistics	1300	1290	1250	
Science	1300	1280	1250	1310-1400
Scientific Inquiry	1300	1270	1260	
Life Science	1300	1310	1250	
Earth/Space Science	1300	1290	1280	
Physical Science	1300	1250	1160	
Social Studies	1300	1270	1240	1310-1400
Historical Environment	1300	1250	1260	
Political Environment	1300	1250	1230	
Physical Environment	1300	1260	1210	
Economic Environment	1300	1300	1130	
Sociocultural Environment	1300	1270	1220	
Process Skills	1300	1290	1280	
Clarifying, Evaluating, Using Info.	1300	1260	1310	



!!!CAUTION!!!
The results in this report are based upon a small number of students, and are likely to fluctuate significantly from year to year. See accompanying memorandum for information on the interpretation of results for small schools and districts.

* ♦ = 1988 COHORT
X = 1989 COHORT

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Massachusetts Educational Assessment Program

SUMMARY OF TEST RESULTS *

District: Pittsfield
School: Stearns Elementary
Grade: 4
Date: April, 1989

Scaled scores allow you to compare your results to the statewide average. For example, your scaled score of 1320 in reading means that the average score of the students in this school was higher than the statewide average. Scaled scores also allow you to compare your results in one content area to another. For example, the average score of the students in this school was lower in mathematics than reading. Scaled scores also allow you to compare your results to those of previous years. If available, the results for this school on the 1985-86 assessment are provided on page 8.

Comparison Score Bands allow you to compare your results to those of schools with similar background characteristics. For example, your scaled score in reading is within the range of the middle 50 percent of schools like yours.

Content Area	Average Test Score			Comparison Score Band	School Average (♦) Relative to Comparison Score Band (▒▒) 1000 1100 1200 1300 1400 1500 1600
	State	District	School		
Reading	1300	1290	1320	1320-1390	
Vocabulary	1300	1300	1470		
Literal Comprehension	1300	1290	1290		
Inferential Comprehension	1300	1300	1300		
Study Skills	1300	1290	1330		
Mathematics	1300	1280	1310	1320-1390	
Numbers/Numeration	1300	1280	1230		
Operations	1300	1250	1300		
Variables/Relations	1300	1240	1270		
Measurement/Geometry	1300	1250	1370		
Problem Solving Skills	1300	1280	1340		
Probability/Statistics	1300	1290	1250		
Science	1300	1280	1320	1320-1390	
Scientific Inquiry	1300	1270	1310		
Life Science	1300	1310	1310		
Earth/Space Science	1300	1290	1380		
Physical Science	1300	1250	1320		
Social Studies	1300	1270	1320	1320-1400	
Historical Environment	1300	1250	1340		
Political Environment	1300	1250	1350		
Physical Environment	1300	1260	1280		
Economic Environment	1300	1300	1280		
Sociocultural Environment	1300	1270	1220		
Process Skills	1300	1290	1360		
Clarifying, Evaluating, Using Info.	1300	1260	1400		

* COMBINED SCORES 1988 + 1989 N=49

F-3

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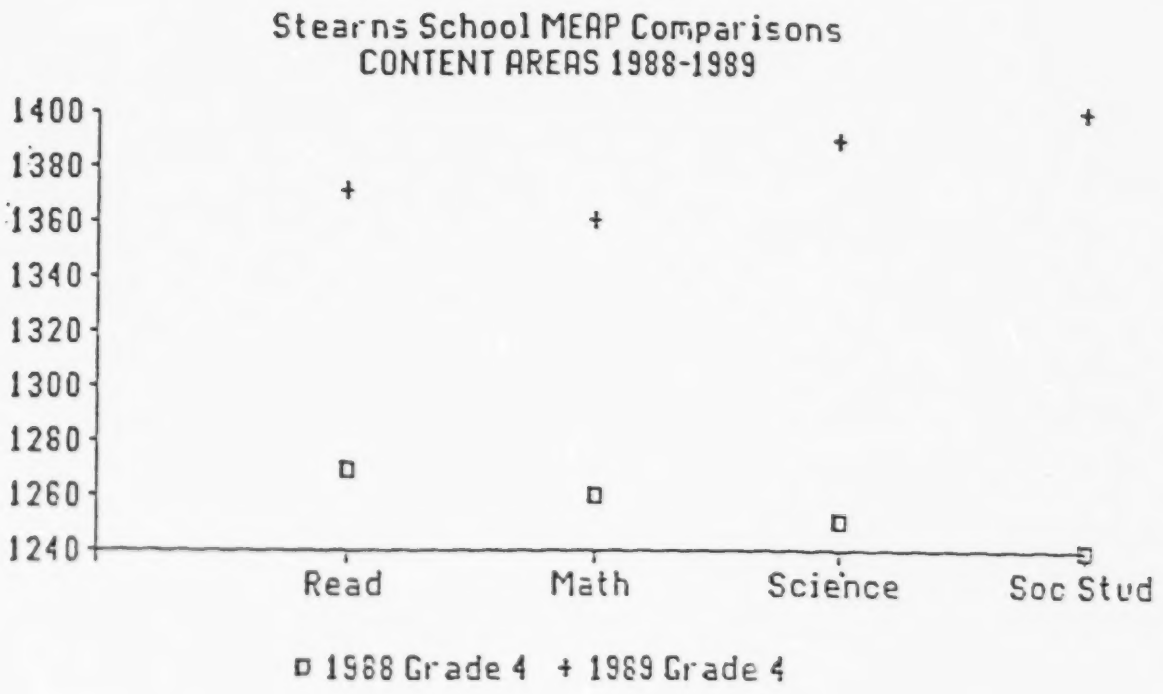
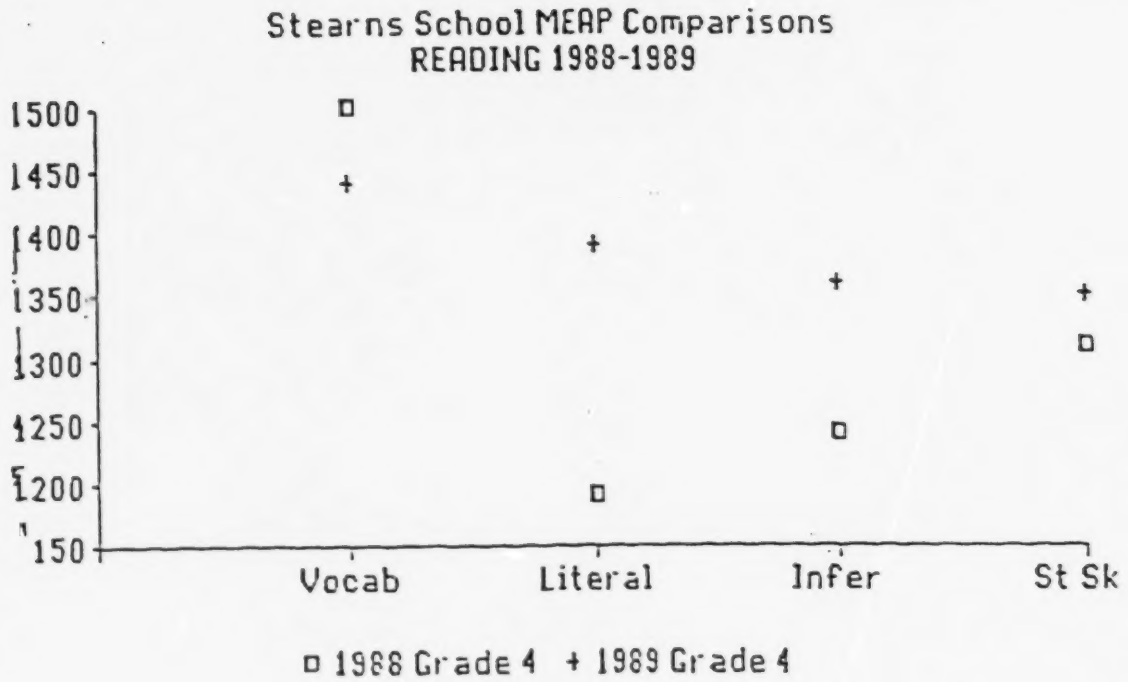
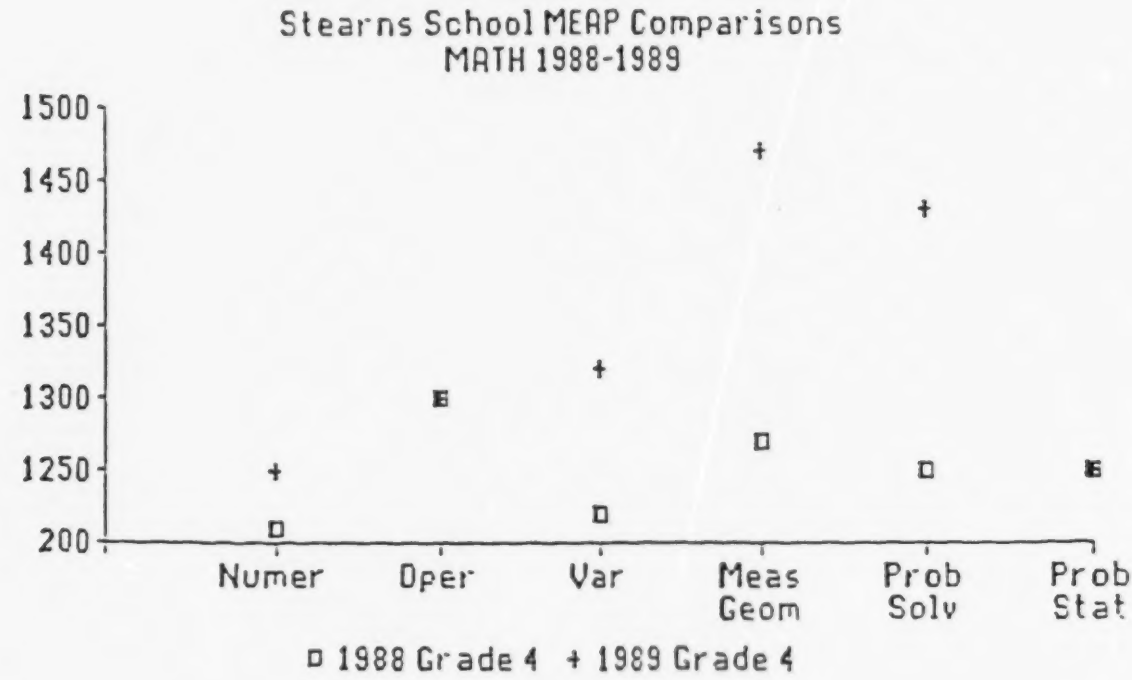
APPENDIX G

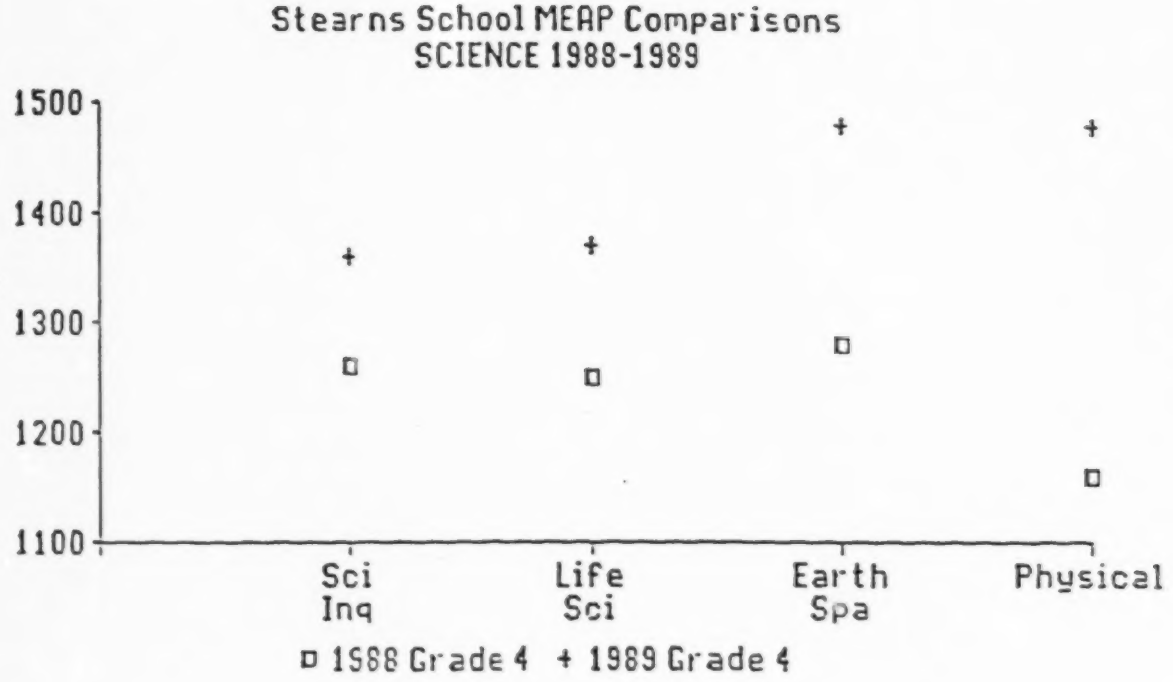
Stearns School MEAP Comparisons

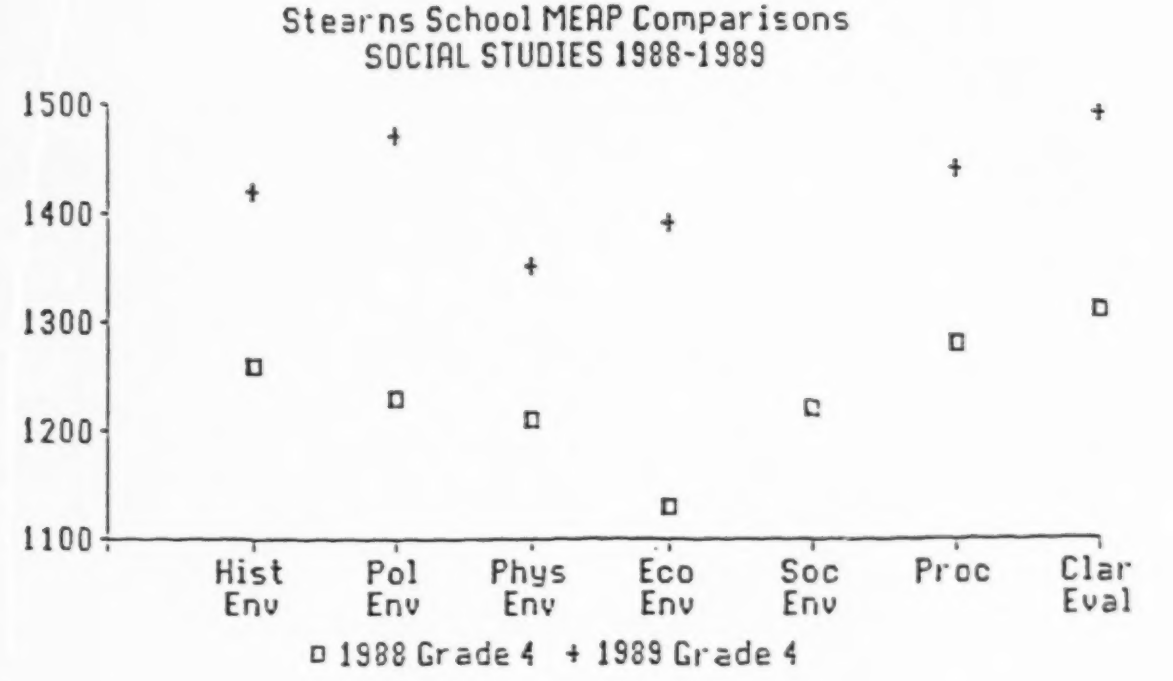
ATTACHMENT G




Stearns School MEAP Comparisons
READING 1988-1989
1500
1450
1400
1350
1300
1250
1200
150
Vocab
Literal
Infer
St Sk
□ 1988 Grade 4 + 1989 Grade 4


Stearns School MEAP Comparisons
MATH 1988-1989
1500
1450
1400
1350
1300
1250
200
Numer
Oper
Var
Meas Geom
Prob Solv
Prob Stat
□ 1988 Grade 4 + 1989 Grade 4


Stearns School MEAP Comparisons
SCIENCE 1988-1989
1500
1400
1300
1200
1100
Sci Inq
Life Sci
Earth Spa
Physical
1988 Grade 4
1989 Grade 4


Stearns School MEAP Comparisons
SOCIAL STUDIES 1988-1989
1500
1400
1300
1200
1100
Hist Env
Pol Env
Phys Env
Eco Env
Soc Env
Proc
Clar Eval
1988 Grade 4
1989 Grade 4

APPENDIX H

MEAP Action Plan: Stearns School

APPENDIX H

MEAP Action Plan: Stearns School

March 1991

Summary of Test Results from April 1990

Stearns School made significant gains in all areas that were reported to be of major concern after the April 1988 testing.

		1988	1990
Reading	Average Score	1270	1410
Literal Comprehension		1190	1540
Content Passages		1180	1480
Mathematics	Average Score	1260	1360
Numeration		1110	1350
Estimation		1190	1370
Probability and Statistics		1180	1500
Procedural Knowledge		1170	1320
Science	Average Score	1250	1390
Data Interpretation		1140	1530
Health		1170	1300
Animal Life		1150	1400
Geology/Natural Resources		1130	1250
Energy		1070	1370
Force and Motion		1090	1400
Social Studies	Average Score	1240	1390
Human Geography		1090	1420
Economic Environment		1130	1350

Areas of relative weaknesses indentified from the April 1990 testing are as follows:

Reading	Average Score	1410
Vocabulary		1310
External Perspective		1320
Internal Perspective/ Evaluating Ideas		1390
Practical Passages		1360
Mathematics	Average Score	1360
Numeration		1290
Whole Numbers (Operations)		1270
Fractions, Decimals (Operations)		1250
Relevant Information		1290
Graphs, Tables, Charts		1300
Social Studies	Average Score	1390
Specifics of History		1340
Multicultural Environment		1340
Map Skills		1270
Research Skills		1310
Science	Average Score	1390
Health		1300
Astronomy		1340
Geology/Natural Resources/ Oceanography		1250
Technologies		1280